

Mermaids? Dana Point Locals Laugh Off TV Documentary

A Discovery Channel show explores the idea, but people who work near the harbor aren't biting.



Alexandra Scarfone, Patch Staff P

Posted Mon, Jul 16, 2012 at 11:22 pm PT

Updated Wed, Jul 18, 2012 at 3:03 pm PT

Reply



Despite a popular pay-TV documentary and widespread rumors of a mermaid body being found, those who work on Dana Point's waterfront remain skeptical of the hullabaloo.

"In the 16 years that I've worked at Dana Wharf, I've seen hundreds of pretty girls but none with a tail," said Capt. Brian Woolley of the Sum Fun vessel.

Donna Kalez, longtime general manager of Dana Wharf Sportfishing and Whale Watching, said: "I stayed up and watched that special; I fell asleep. That mermaid story was dumb."

After the documentary resurfaced this week on the Discovery Channel, numerous rumors circulated about a body being found, prompting the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) to issue a denial.

NOAA spokeswoman Keeley Belva told CNN the organization had recently received questions about the existence of mermaids, which she attributes in part to the release of the documentary.

[NOAA recently published a statement](#) on its website saying there was no evidence that “aquatic humanoids” have ever existed. And [USA Today said](#) the scene in which a mermaid’s body is found by a young boy was staged.

The documentary, [Mermaids: The Body Found](#), poses the question: “What if there’s a kernel of truth that lives beneath the legend of the mythical mermaid?”

However, an editor’s note on the show's website adds a disclaimer that “this two-hour special is science fiction based on some real events and scientific theory.”

Locals React

Karin Vardaman, maritime director at the Ocean Institute, said the show sounded silly: "I didn't see the special on the Discovery Channel, and I am not an expert, but I don't see how it would be biologically possible for a half-human, half-fish. I know there are a lot of myths throughout history, but I've never seen any confirmation they exist."

But the owner of The Real Deli at 34320 Pacific Coast Highway said he's on the fence. "Mermaids? May very well be. A little bit of folklore never hurt anyone," said Charlie Mattouk. "They remind me of the tie between humans and other creatures - an important bond that is too often overlooked."

On the pro-mermaid side, [according to CNN](#), is a YouTube viewer who commented: “I honestly think it is selfish of people to think we are the only human creatures on Earth. ... There is stuff out there we can’t explain.”

And John Athanson, public relations manager for Weeki Wachee (otherwise known as the “City of Live Mermaids”) Springs State Park, told CNN: "If you ask me, (mermaids) do exist. They exist, and they exist right here in Weeki Wachee."

So what do you think? Did you watch the documentary? Is it possible mermaids are real?